



April 16, 2020

Dear Brothers & Sisters,

The Lord has risen! It was the first of the week as news began to spread. Confusion, anxiety, and fear gave way to hope! In John 16:33 Jesus says, "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." Easter confirms this good news for everyone!

The question for the disciples now was... "Now, what do we do?" Perhaps in some ways the tension was shifted rather than alleviated. Questions started with, "Are you sure, He is risen?" and then moved to, "Who is going to take Judas' place as one of the twelve?"

However, the Easter story doesn't conclude with a board meeting, equipped with a lengthy agenda and the summation of analytics. Perhaps in the rush to find relief from our tension, we need to busy ourselves with things to do. Being busy helps distract us from contemplation and thinking about things too much. After all, if our hands are busy... then that becomes a great distraction for our minds... and perhaps our hearts. Easter becomes a division between what once was and what now is. Before Easter we wandered, we fussed, and tried to keep busy because at times the tension was just too much... the burden too great. But Jesus broke through that barrier of darkness and has definitively provided us with a path of hope and joy! We are not longer bound by the darkness of the world!

Nils Frykman a Swedish composer wrote the song "Nu är jag nöjd och gläder," in response to the joy and hope found in Christ. The song has been translated to English as "I Sing With Joy and Gladness, appears as hymn #498 in the Evangelical Covenant Hymnal. The first stanza of the song captures for us a person steeped in the reflection of life post Easter:

*"I sing with joy and gladness, my soul has found release:
Now free from sin and sadness with God I live in peace.
His everlasting mercy to me has been revealed;
His truth in my heart has been sealed."*

Christ conquered the chains that bind us to the anxieties of this world. We need only to look to the cross to remember that we too are free from sadness, we have joy, and a hope found in our risen King! The Lord has risen indeed!

Grace & Peace,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "A. Eric", followed by a horizontal line.

Pastor Eric

To connect with people on their faith journey, so that life in Christ flourishes!

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Henri Nouwen Thoughts & Comfort

Hope means to keep living
amid desperation
and to keep humming
in the darkness.

Hoping is knowing that there is love,
it is trust in tomorrow
it is falling asleep
and waking again
when the sun rises.

In the midst of a gale at sea,
it is to discover land.

In the eyes of another
It is to see that he understands you.

As long as there is still hope
There will also be prayer.

And God will be holding you
in his hands.

- Henri Nouwen